United States Department of Agriculture
Soil Conservation Service
Boise, Idaho

Nezpar Indian Ricegrass

NEZPAR INDIAN RICEGRASS

Nezpar Indian ricegrass is one of the West's most distinct and beautiful perennial bunchgrasses. Nezpar is extremely drought tolerant and provides natural erosion control.

Named in honor of the Nez Perce Indians, Nezpar was collected from native vegetation near Whitebird, Idaho. The nutritious seeds were once one of the food staples of many Western Indians.

Nezpar was released in 1978 by the Soil Conservation Service and the University of Idaho Agricultural Experiment Station.

Adaptability

This erect, cool-season, native bunchgrass is adapted especially for the West and will grow well in Idaho, Utah, and Nevada. It is found on high mountain, dry southerly exposures to desert floors. It prefers sand dunes, sandy plains, canyons, hillsides, and exposed ridge sites.

Nezpar is adapted to coarse soils in areas with at least 9 inches (22.86 cm) annual precipitation. At elevations of 6000 feet (1828.8 m) and above, where average annual temperature is 40°F, (4.5" C) or less, plantings should be restricted to south and west slopes or other "hot" situations.

Uses

Nezpar is particularly adapted for winter forage. The plant does best when grazed in fall and winter and is highly palatable to all wildlife and all classes of livestock. It cures exceptionally well and provides nutritious winter feed. Stands deteriorate under spring grazing.

Nezpar is well adapted for rangeland seedings. It is also in demand for use in the revegetation of lands disturbed by surface mining and for critical area stabilization.

Seeds of Nezpar start to mature in early summer and provide a high energy, sustaining diet for upland game birds and rodents.

Seeding Recommendations

In sandy soils at the lower end of the precipitation range, seed should be planted 3 to 4 inches deep. In less droughty situations, shallower seeding depths may be used, depending on conditions such as soil and age of seed. Older seed doesn't have the same capacity to emerge from a deep planting that young seed has.

When included in a seed mixture that will be planted 1 inch deep, seed that is 5 to 10 years old is recommended. Shallow seedings must be made in late fall to reduce bird and rodent depredation.

It is recommended all plantings be made on a Pure Live Seed (PLS) basis.

$$\frac{\% \text{ Purity} \times \% \text{ Germination}}{100} = \text{PLS}\%$$

Suggested Seeding Rates

Row Spacing (inches)	PLS Linear Foot	Lbs./Acre at 80% PLS
6	24	10*
12	24	5*
36**	24	3*

*Includes viable hard seeds
**Seed production

Seed Production

Optimum soils are loamy sands, sandy loam, and fine sandy loam. Irrigated field conditions are recommended and should produce about 370 pounds per acre cleaned seed. Two years should be allowed for adequate stand establishment.

Seed Availability

Foundation seed is available through the University of Idaho Research and Extension Center, Utah Crop Improvement Association, and soil conservation districts in Idaho and Utah. Breeder seed is maintained by the Plant Materials Center at Aberdeen, Idaho. Registered and certified seed is available from commercial agricultural seed dealers.

The Soil Conservation Service operates and maintains one of its 23 plant materials centers at Aberdeen, Idaho. Special emphasis is placed on finding suitable plants for erosion control on soils and sites where it is difficult to establish protective vegetative cover.

Plant materials are a significant component of about two-thirds of the conservation practices that farmers, ranchers, and others find essential to the solution of erosion and sedimentation problems. It is SCS policy to assemble, evaluate, release, and distribute for commercial increase, new or improved plant materials needed for resource conservation and development.

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